DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
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Transportation Planning Division

MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 17, 2011 HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT CORRIDOR WORK GROUP MEETING

To:	High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group
From:	Jim Maslanka, City of Alexandria, T&ES; Steve Sindiong, City of Alexandria, T&ES
Meeting Date:	November 17, 2011
Time:	7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Meeting Location:	Patrick Henry Elementary School, Auditorium
Subject:	Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group Meeting #10
Attendees:	**Corridor Work Group:** Councilman Paul Smedberg (Co-Chair), Donna Fossum, Dak Hardwick, Poul Hertel, Nancy Jennings, John Komoroske **City of Alexandria staff:** Rich Baier (Director T&ES), Abi Lerner (Deputy Director, T&ES), Jim Maslanka (T&ES), Steve Sindiong (T&ES), Danielle Parker (T&ES), Pat Mann (P&Z) **Consultants:** David Whyte (Kimley-Horn), Erin Murphy (Kimley-Horn), Paul Elman (Kimley-Horn), Amy Archer (RK&K) **City Council:** Del Pepper **Members of the Public:** 32 citizens signed in

Agenda

Corridor B (Duke Street/Eisenhower) Discussion

1. Introduction
    a. Opening Remarks
    b. Meeting Objectives and Goals
        i. General Updates
        ii. Corridor B Alignment Alternatives – Preliminary Screening Results

2. General Updates
    a. Distribution of August 18 / September 15 meeting minutes

3. Corridor B Preliminary Concepts
    a. Overview of Preliminary Screening Criteria
    b. Traffic Analysis results

c. Corridor B Preliminary Concepts
    i. Alignment
    ii. Mode Technology
d. Corridor B Preliminary Concept Screening Results

4. General CWG & Public Comment

5. Logistics and Next Steps
    a. Next meeting date
    b. Next meeting topic

Summary of Discussion

Introduction

- Goal of the meeting:
    - Abi Lerner, T&ES, noted that the goal of the meeting will be to review Corridor B alignment concepts and preliminary screening, and determine concepts to move forward with for secondary screening.

August 18 Minutes (Corridor B)

- Minutes were approved. Dak Hardwick abstained.

September 15 Minutes (Corridor A)

- Poul Hertel noted that on page 3, his preferred choice for Corridor A is the No Build option, and that the circulator concept should be further explored. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Corridor B Discussion on Existing Conditions

- Presentation by David Whyte, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

- Corridor Work Group (CWG) Comments

    - ***Councilman Paul Smedberg***
        - If there are areas with no dedicated lanes, can there still be bus pullouts? ***Answer:*** Yes, this is similar to Alternative B.
        - With the Landmark Mall redevelopment, which will include a new transit center, how does that impact the western portion of Corridor B? We should also consider using redevelopment to help secure additional right-of-way. ***Answer:*** We agree that we should look to reserve right-of-way where there is redevelopment planned or underway. In the Landmark Mall area, the multimodal bridge will be of particular importance.

    - ***Donna Fossum***
        - On Duke Street at Taylor Run Parkway, there is a lot of congestion that blocks the intersection.
        - What is the baseline year for the traffic analysis? ***Answer:*** Year 2020
        - For westbound Duke Street near Taylor Run Parkway, consider right-in / right-out operations, and restrict left turns out onto Duke Street by making minor modifications to Duke Street.
        - On the general cross-section diagram in the presentation, do not show on-street parking along Duke Street.

- There are two fire stations on Duke Street. One is one of only two stations in the west end. A lot of emergency vehicles use Duke Street on a regular basis – concerned that taking away a general purpose lane would negatively impact emergency services. Consider the effect to emergency vehicle operations in the analysis of options for Duke Street.
- The service/frontage roads along Duke Street alternate between sides of the street. How were they considered in the analysis? ***Answer:*** There are three types of frontage/service roads: 1) those that serve as roadway access to the side streets; 2) those that provide for local access to driveways, and 3) those that provide local access and parking. In the analysis of initial alternatives, despite the right-of-way for Duke Street actually including the service roads, impacts were measured against the narrower functional width of the Duke Street portion of the right-of-way.

- ***Dak Hardwick***
  - There is congestion on Duke Street between Quaker Lane and Telegraph Road. Is the current congestion related to the construction on Telegraph Road? ***Answer:*** No, the traffic model assumes that the Telegraph Road improvements are already built.
  - Would transit signal priority (TSP) improve traffic conditions over what is present today? ***Answer:*** Yes, at some intersections, TSP can improve operations for transit. In other locations, it would only minimally offer benefits to operations unless physical improvements are made to Duke Street.
  - Regarding the Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) model, concerned about taking lanes on the west side of the City for westbound traffic, especially with the redevelopment of the Landmark Mall.
  - Where alternatives result in congestion, such as at Quaker Lane, this creates a division between the east and west sides of Alexandria.
  - Can curb running and median running operations be done within the same alternative? ***Answer:*** Yes, however this requires transitions (depending on mode, this might require traffic signals), could increase travel time, and could increase the complexity of operations.
  - Likes alternative B, but thinks an Alternative B Plus should be explored. This option would use TSP and queue jumps at congested areas such as at Quaker Lane, to minimize impacts to property.

- ***Poul Hertel***
  - The City encourages the use of bicycles as part of the Complete Streets policy. However, we should not sacrifice pedestrians at the sake of providing for bicycles, especially as the City becomes more urban.
  - In Potomac Yard, there was an agreement that the dedicated transit lanes could be used by emergency vehicles.
  - Regarding the COG forecast, did you change the zone structure? ***Answer:*** No, about a dozen Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ's) were within the study area.
  - The model only assumes home based work trips. Other transit trips were not assumed in the model, therefore, it may be underestimating the potential ridership (shifting of travel mode). ***Answer:*** The majority of trips in the peak hour are generally home based work-related.
  - Was the mode split calculated? ***Answer:*** No – we did not calculate the mode split or ridership.
  - Would have liked to see the projected ridership. ***Answer:*** Ridership estimates will be developed as part of the next stage of the project.
  - The City's Transportation Master Plan has a goal of not catering to through traffic.
  - Recommend having dedicated lanes that use existing lanes, except for the portion between Jordan Street and Roth Street. At that location, transit should operate curbside in shared lanes. Also, consider eliminating stops within that section to the extent feasible. ***Staff Comment:*** Rich Baier noted that this is an example where the language in the

Transportation Master Plan allows for the flexibility of either widening or using the existing right-of-way to accommodate the transitway.

- ***Nancy Jennings***
  - The traffic analysis is somewhat counterintuitive
  - The Duke Street corridor has well used transit service and deserves something better than what is there today.
  - Like the Alternative B (Plus). Consider left turn restrictions and bus pullouts.
  - A big question that needs to be addressed is: are we going to make traffic better, or are we going to reduce impacts to adjacent properties?

- ***John Komoroske***
  - Agree with the emergency services issue.
  - Think Alternative D is the best alternative – it will help to improve the streetscape along Duke Street. There is frontage available in front of Alexandria Commons.

- ***Public Comment*** on Corridor B Alignment Options
  - The transitway along Duke Street will disrupt the quality of life for adjacent residents. Who are we trying to serve? When there is an accident on I-395, a lot of traffic uses Duke Street as an alternative route. Want to keep the turn lanes to help reduce queues.
  - Disappointed that the typical cross-sections did not include bicycle facilities. ***Answer:*** The cross-sections were purely to represent transit, and would not necessarily preclude bicycle facilities.
  - Don't think there should be a limitation of stops between Jordan Street and Roth Street.
  - Want to know why Poul Hertel is wavering from providing dedicated lanes. ***Answer:*** Don't want to negatively impact the quality of life for adjacent residents. It is irresponsible to destroy the streetscape. Want to have a compromise that improves transit speeds without major impacts to adjacent property.
  - For alternatives that take away a general purpose lane, I think the traffic model underestimated the number of people who will transition to transit.
  - Found out about the meeting tonight by accident. When will the people who are impacted by the project be notified? Mailers should be sent to adjacent residents. ***Answer:*** We are at the early stages of the project. The meeting notice is included in the e-news, the e-mail distribution, and on the project webpage. People need to sign up for e-news. For the next meeting, staff will send out flyers to adjacent residents.
  - What is the project timeline? ***Answer:*** We are still in the very early stages of the project.
  - How many people will use the transitway? ***Answer:*** We will have ridership estimates at the next meeting.
  - Between Jordan Street and Quaker Lane, there are four neighborhoods that have service roads. These roads are needed for trash pickup, delivery, etc. They are important to the residents and should not be impacted.
  - Why isn't the study looking at the types of vehicles that would be considered, such as streetcars? ***Answer:*** We will discuss that at the next Corridor B meeting.
  - Residents are not the people causing the congestion – it's regional traffic during the peak periods. How are you going to encourage the local residents to use the transitway? ***Answer:*** The City did a cordon study in 2003 in the vicinity of Quaker Lane that also checked license plates. The study found that 50 percent of the traffic was Alexandrians. You need to think of the transitway as a subregional transportation system that provides connections to the Metro stations.
  - We don't need a 2020 traffic study to know that there is congestion near Quaker Lane. Want to know what will be done to ease congestion from Quaker eastward. ***Answer:*** The model results show that transit improvements will help to shift a significant number of people on to transit. It's important to know that congestion will not go away, therefore it is important to provide other mobility options.

- When the City goes to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the FTA will want to know how the project promotes livable communities, and improves safety.
- How does the project improve connectivity to the Van Dorn Metro station?
- Concerned about widening – It makes it harder for pedestrians to cross the street, and it results in the construction taking longer because more processes are needed. The target should be to minimize roadway widening. Consider narrower streetcars. Between Quaker Lane and Roth Street, consider narrower lanes.
- Shared lanes will not work – they will reduce transit speed, and therefore deter ridership.
- A median runningway could be built to prohibit left turns to and out of cross-streets.
- Need a slide showing proof that the model matches the current congestion. Not sure I believe in the counter-intuitiveness of the model.
- What is the mode split for Duke Street? ***Answer:*** We do not have that information readily available.
- Consider an option that does nothing except has a turn lane between Quaker Lane and Jordan Street.
- Live in the Clover College Park neighborhood. Need an escape route for people getting out of the Duke / Quaker congestion. Hope this project won't exasperate the situation.
- I drive Quaker Lane every night. There is a lot of southbound left turn movements at Duke Street. Consider extending the southbound left turn lane for more capacity.
- Consider a single reversible lane on Duke Street between Quaker Lane and Roth Street. ***Answer:*** That is a potential compromise solution.
- Don't want dedicated median lanes – it is a safety issue, especially for younger people.
- The key to improving transit is to provide frequency, and making it pedestrian friendly.
- Who are we trying to attract? Local or regional traffic? If it is local, the land uses along the corridor are not dense enough.
- Are there any surveys of employee resident locations?

Logistics and Next Steps

- The next meeting for Corridor A will be on Thursday, December 15, 2011.
- The next meeting for Corridor B will be on Thursday, January 19, 2012.